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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0074

INFO RUEHAA/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT PRIORITY 2643

RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ASTANA PRIORITY 0217

RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK PRIORITY 4266

RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 1368

RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2135

RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 7236

RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 8502

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 5891

RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1219

RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 3377

RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY PRIORITY 9912

RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 3293

RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 6501

RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 0945

RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 2698

RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 3683

RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 1103

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2550

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002795

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [KCRM](#) [PK](#) [UK](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OPPOSITION SUBMITS REFERENCE
AGAINST PRIME MINISTER

REF: ISLAMABAD 2546

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter Bodde, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶11. (C) Summary: On June 21, opposition National Assembly members submitted a disqualification reference (complaint) against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz for financial misconduct. The reference comes on the heels of a similar reference against political leader (and former cricket star) Imran Khan, who has taken a very public stand against MQM leader and government partner Altaf Hussain. (Khan, like many Pakistanis, blames the MQM for the outbreak of political violence in Karachi in May.) The reference against the Prime Minister appears to be political retaliation for the reference against Khan, but the nature of the charges in the reference have been fodder for the Pakistani rumor mill for months. End Summary.

Opposition Parliamentarians Allege Prime Minister Unfit to Serve in Parliament

¶12. (U) On June 21, in the midst of annual budget hearings, opposition National Assembly members presented a disqualification reference against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The opposition members asked National Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Amir Hussain to consider the reference in the same light as the one the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) submitted against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader (and former cricket star) Imran Khan on June 20. (Note: The reference against the former playboy charged that he fathered an illegitimate child. End Note.)

¶13. (U) The opposition's reference alleges that Aziz "engineered" the 2005 Karachi stock exchange crash. It

claims that, after the crash, Aziz's business associates "enriched themselves at the cost of the public at large through fraud, forgery and manipulation." The reference also cites Aziz's involvement in the attempt to privatize Pakistan Steel Mills, a privatization plan which some believe would have enriched associates of the Prime Minister. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Chaudhry eventually blocked the privatization scheme.

¶4. (C) One opposition member who helped draft the reference told PolOff June 20 that the reference sheet includes the accusation that the Prime Minister holds dual U.S.-Pakistani nationality, contrary to constitutional prohibitions on dual citizenship for senior officials. The member said that the drafters almost included another charge referring to allegations he once "flirted" with Secretary Rice during an official meeting.

Leading PML Politician
Saw It Coming

¶5. (C) Pakistan Muslim League Secretary General Mushahid Hussain told PolOff June 20 that the National Assembly speaker never should have accepted the original reference against Imran Khan, since it could spark a rash of similar references. "Everyone in the National Assembly could be accused of something," he said. Indeed, some opposition members have vowed to file additional references against members of the ruling coalition, including Pakistan Muslim

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League Chairman Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, who allegedly took out loans that he did not repay and were subsequently forgiven.

Comment

¶6. (C) The specific charges in the Prime Minister's reference have been the focus of speculation and debate for some months. One prevalent rumor is that the Prime Minister is working against passage of an anti-money laundering bill because he worries his actions during the Karachi Stock Exchange could be further investigated under such legislation. Other rumors involve his encouraging the suspension of Chief Justice Chaudhry out of anger over the scuttling the steel privatization plan. Merited or not, though, it is clear the June 21 reference was politically based. Opposition parties know that Imran Khan's popularity has increased since he began his public crusade against the MQM. By filing a reference designed to support Khan, the opposition hopes to gain from the current anti-MQM sentiment in much of the country.

BODDE